

of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5686 of July 31, 1987

Helsinki Human Rights Day, 1987

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Twelve years ago, the United States, Canada, and 33 European countries signed the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. These nations thereby committed themselves to observe important standards of international conduct and to respect basic human rights and fundamental freedoms at home. They also pledged themselves to pursue practical steps to reduce the barriers by which the Soviet Union has divided Europe into East and West, denying the nations of Eastern Europe the right of self-determination and limiting contact between peoples.

The Helsinki Final Act embodies its signatories' agreement that freedom and human rights are the best guarantors of peace. It mandated that these freedoms, routinely enjoyed by the peoples of the West, be recognized and respected as well in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. After more than a decade, though there have been some limited gains, that mandate has not been fulfilled.

The Soviet Union and the Soviet-dominated governments of Eastern Europe have systematically violated many of their most fundamental Helsinki pledges. Freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, and belief are constrained. Loved ones, families, and friends are kept apart. The flow of ideas and information is restricted. The right of the individual to depart from and return to his own country is denied. Helsinki monitors and other prisoners of conscience continue to languish in prisons, labor camps, psychiatric hospitals, and internal exile, merely for expressing their political and religious beliefs. In Perm Camp 36-1, the most brutal of the labor camps in the Gulag, ten political prisoners—three of whom were Helsinki monitors—have died in the last 3 years. Harsh treatment and lack of medical care threaten the lives of those remaining in the camp.

These and other violations have exacted a fearsome and tragic human cost, and they reflect a disregard for the fundamental principle that in order for any of a nation's international agreements to be respected, all must be observed. The continuing violations of Helsinki obligations by the Soviet Union and the Soviet-dominated countries of Eastern Europe place in doubt those nations' faithful observance of their international obligations in every sphere.

The third Follow-up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has been underway in Vienna since November 1986. The primary aim of the United States and its NATO Allies in Vienna is to secure compliance by the East with the commitments made at Helsinki, so that

citizens in all the signatory states can enjoy the fundamental freedoms agreed to in the Final Act.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 151, has designated August 1, 1987, as "Helsinki Human Rights Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in its observance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim August 1, 1987, as Helsinki Human Rights Day and reaffirm the American commitment to universal observance of the values enshrined in the Final Act. These values are fundamental to our way of life and a source of inspiration to peoples around the world. In renewing our dedication with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, let us call upon all signatories of the Final Act to match deeds with words and to respect in full its solemn principles and provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5687 of July 28, 1987

Thanksgiving Day, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Thanksgiving Day is one of our most beloved holidays, an occasion set aside by Americans from earliest times to thank our Maker prayerfully and humbly for the blessings and the care He bestows on us and on our beautiful, bountiful land. Through the decades, through the centuries, in log cabins, country churches, cathedrals, homes, and halls, the American people have paused to give thanks to God, in times of peace and plenty or of danger and distress.

Acknowledgement of dependence on God's favor was, in fact, our fledgling Nation's very first order of business. When the delegates to the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in 1774, they overcame discord by uniting in prayer for our country. Despite the differences among them as they began their work, they found common voice in the 35th Psalm, which concludes with a verse of joyous gratitude, "And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long."

This year, of course, our Thanksgiving Day celebration coincides with the Bicentennial of the Constitution. In 1789 the government established by that great charter of freedom, and "the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed," were cited by George Washington in the first Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation as among "the great and various favors" conferred upon us by the Lord and Ruler of Nations. As we thank the God our first President called "that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be," we have even